

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 RABAT 01172 251240Z  
ACTION NEA-10

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S E C R E T RABAT 1172

FOR NEA ONLY FOR DEP ASST SECY VELIOTES

E. O. 11652: XGDS-3  
TAGS: MASS, MO  
SUBJ: SENATOR CLARK'S LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT ON MOROCCAN  
ARMS REQUEST

1. WE APPRECIATE AFN'S PROVIDING COPY OF SENATOR CLARK'S  
FEBRUARY 8 LETTER, AND OFFER THE FOLLOWING THOUGHTS WHICH  
MAY BE PERTINENT IN PREPARING A REPLY OR IN FUTURE  
CONVERSATIONS WITH SENATOR CLARK OR OTHERS ON THE HILL.  
MY POINT HERE IS TO DEFINE THE PROBLEM AS ACCURATELY AS  
WE CAN AND THEN DETERMINE ITS RELEVANCE TO THE U.S.  
NATIONAL INTEREST. I CAN SEE VERY CLEARLY THE DIFFICULTY  
OF PURSUING THE CURRENT MOROCCAN ARMS REQUEST WITH THE  
CONGRESS AT THIS TIME -- THE DECISION TO SELL AIRCRAFT  
TO SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT AND ISRAEL, THE EVENTS IN THE  
HORN OF AFRICA, CURRENT QUESTIONING OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S  
POLICY OF ARMS SALES AND THE LIKE. IN TURING DOWN THE  
MOROCCAN REQUEST WE WOULD HAVE TO, I BELIEVE, GIVE THE KING A  
FRANK, HONEST REPLY WHICH WOULD ENABLE HIM TO SQUARE IT  
WITH THE STATEMENTS THE PRESIDENT HAS PASSED ON TO  
HIM ABOUT HIS CONCERN FOR THE SECURITY OF MOROCCO.

2. IN HIS LETTER, THE SENATOR ASCRIBES TO SUPPORTERS  
OF MOROCCAN ARMS REQUEST THE DESIRE TO SIGNAL SUPPORT  
FOR A MODERATE STATE, TO RESPOND TO FEARS OF SOVIET  
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PENETRATION, AND TO EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR MOROCCAN  
ROLE IN ZAIRE. WHILE THESE ARE CONSIDERATIONS, THE  
MAIN RATIONALE IS THE DIRECT U.S. NATIONAL INTEREST  
IN CONTRIBUTING TO STABILIZING THE DETERIORATING  
SITUATION IN THE REGION. THE GREAT INFLUX OF SOVIET  
WEAPONS INTO ALGERIA AND LIBYA HAS PERMITTED THE  
POLISARIO TO UNDERTAKE THE ESCALATION OF THE PAST

YEAR AND A HALF, AS NOTED BY THE SENATOR, AND TO BRING ABOUT THE VERY SERIOUSLY DETERIORATING SITUATION IN MAURITANIA AS A RESULT OF ATTACKS ON THAT STATE. IN LIGHT OF ALGERIA'S OVERWHELMING SUPERIORITY IN MILITARY EQUIPMENT, ESPECIALLY IN AIRCRAFT AND TANKS, THE PROVISION OF OV-10S AND COBRAS REPRESENTS A MATERIALLY MINOR BUT PSYCHOLOGICALLY IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD REDRESSING THE MILITARY BALANCE AND MEETING THE GROWING ALGERIAN MILITARY THREAT.

3. THIS THREAT, AS NOTED, IS NOT SIMPLY TO THE SAHARA, BUT IN FACT HAS BEEN DIRECTED TO A LARGE DEGREE AGAINST MAURITANIA, A SOVEREIGN STATE. IN ADDITION, CONTRARY TO SENATOR CLARK'S STATEMENT THAT MOROCCO ITSELF IS NOT UNDER ATTACK, THE GUERRILLA WAR HAS IN FACT BEEN WAGED WITHIN MOROCCO ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS, AND MAY INCREASE BECAUSE OF FRANCE'S DECISION LAST DECEMBER TO INTERVENE MILITARILY IN MAURITANIA "TO PROTECT ITS CITIZENS". IN SUM, THE FALL OF MAURITANIA, YET NEW TERRITORIAL DISPUTES WHICH COULD RESULT THEREFROM (E.G. CANARIES), THE POSSIBLE CREATION OF A RADICAL, UNVIABLE MINI-STATE IN THE SAHARA, AND CONSEQUENT DESTABILIZATION WITHIN MOROCCO ITSELF WOULD DAMAGE U.S. INTERESTS AND PEACE IN THE AREA.

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4. IT MIGHT ALSO BE USEFUL TO EXPAND ON THE SENATOR'S LIST OF INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CONFLICT. THE GOM, FOR EXAMPLE, SEES ITSELF AS PROTECTING THE RESTORATION OF MOROCCO'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, DISRUPTED BY THE COLONIAL POWERS. MORE DISINTERESTED OBSERVERS SEE IT AS A LONG-TERM GEO-POLITICAL STRUGGLE WITH ALGERIA. THE LATTER'S STRESS ON SELF-DETERMINATION IS SEEN HERE AS A PLOY IN PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE RATHER THAN AN EXPRESSION OF REAL CONCERN FOR THE SAHARANS.

5. THE POSSIBILITY OF "TRIGGERING A GREATER SOVIET RESPONSE" ALSO BEARS SCRUTINY. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SAHARA AND OTHER CONFLICTS SUCH AS CHAD AND THE HORN APPEARS TO BE TENUOUS AT BEST. SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ALGERIA IS ALREADY SO GREAT THAT IT SURPASSES IN QUANTITY AND SOPHISTICATION THE ALGERIAN CAPABILITY TO EMPLOY IT, THOUGH ALGERIA IS NOT YET THE ARMS LOGISTIC BASE THAT LIBYA IS. IT IS ALSO WORTH NOTHING THAT MOROCCO IS IN FACT TRYING TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION THROUGH, FOR EXAMPLE, MOVING FORWARD WITH THE

MESKALA AGREEMENT AND A FISHING TREATY. ALTHOUGH IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE KREMLIN IS ONLY FORMALLY NEUTRUAL AN WILL CONTINUE TO BACK ALGERIA, MOROCCO HOPES TO ESTABLISH SOME LEVERAGE ON THE SOVIET UNION TO KEEP ALGERIA FROM OPENING A DIRECT MILITARY CONFRONTATION WITH MOROCCO. ITS POLICY IS NOT TO MEET SOVIET PENETRATION BY A MILITARY BUILDUP, BUT TO DEFEND ITSELF AND ITS ALLY AGAINST ALMOST DAILY ATTACKS STAGED FROM ALGERIAN SAFEHAVENS.

6. THE U.S. SHOULD OBVIOUSLY DO ALL IT CAN TO PROMOTE A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE SAHARA DISPUTE THROUGH THE OAU OR THE UN. AT THE SAME TIME WE MUST ALSO BE REALISTIC ENOUGH TO RECOGNIZE THAT A  
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NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT REMAINS HIGHLY IMPROBABLE BECAUSE OF THE WIDELY DIVERGENT OBJECTIVES OF THE PARTIES. WITH THIS IN MIND, THE DECISION FOR OUR GOVERNMENT -- THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES -- IS WHETHER A CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL STABILITY THROUGH ASSISTING MOROCCO TO MEET WHAT IS CLEARLY OUTSIDE MILITARY INTERVENTION IS IN THE UNITED STATES INTEREST.  
ANDERSON

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